



EPILOGUE

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How can one come to a conclusion on the ever-flowing stream of *Rāmakathā* ?

Rāmakathā or *Rāmāyaṇa* is the fountain head, 'gomukha' of Indian heritage and culture, art and literature. The *Mandākinī* of Indian tradition flows from *Rāmakathā*. Yet one can only visualise and observe from the close proximity, the dynamics of the ever-flowing ever-changing tradition of *Rāmakathā*, the cultural inflows and outflows, and the ultimate inflow into the vast ocean of society.

At the very outset, the focus is on Drama. From four vedic elements *Pāṭhya*, *gīta*, *abhinaya* and *rasa* originated a new enchanting form of artistic expression and communication called *nāṭya*. It is treated as the pinnacle of poesy, the summit of creativity and imagination, *nāṭakāntam kavitvyam*.

The question arises why *nāṭya* is created ? Bharata the father of Indian aesthetics replies - "*nāṭya* shall be a comfort, a repose, a refreshment to all those who are grieved, miserable and weary".

dukhārtānām śramārtānām śokārtānām tapasvinām /

viśrāma jananaṃ loke nāṭyam etad bhavisyati //

Nāṭya has been created for the masses, for the common people who did not have access to the happiness of life, to knowledge or Vedas, who are neglected and distressed.

Drama is the direct imitation of human life. It is a mirror that reflects people's sorrows and happiness, life and action. It is pleasurable to heart, charming and blissful in nature. helps to build the national character at large.

The nature and development of Drama is like a living organism. It has a Vedic root, it sprouts and grows on the human life and action. It expands and permeates through the society and finally gets its fruition by the *Sahṛdaya*'s savouring of *rasa* through its representation.

It *nāṭya* is a beautiful flower, *rasa* is its fragrance, its essence. *Nāṭya* is an intense extravaganza of human emotions. India presents a continuous tradition of treating this unique phenomenon, *rasa* starting from Bharata till now.

The primary moods or emotive states are the basic and universal phenomenon. It is not an individual experience or specified to any culture or tradition. These are generalised psychological experiences such as love, laughter, jealousy, fear, wonder etc. Luxuriating through the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *sañcāribhāvas* the *sthāyibhāva* or permanent mood is evoked in and relished by the *sahṛdayas*. This is the essence, what the drama or all other creativity explore to get, the sheer joy or pleasure, pain or pathas, wonder, fear and other emotive elements.

Rasa is a bridge between the *kavi* and the *sahṛdaya*. It arises from the *bhāva-bhūmi*, with the rise of *sattva* being evoked by the *vibhāvas*, exhibited by the *anubhāvas*, nourished and nurtured by the *vyabhicāribhāvas*. The *naṭa* or actor is the key-person in this process of *rasodaya*. *Naṭa* has to go through *anusandhāna sikhya* and *abhyāsa*. *Anusandhana* is the most important factor in this process of *rasa*. It has three stages of growth such as - *āropa*, attributing the nature or properties of one thing or person to another, *abhimāna* the act of supposition of one thing or person on another and *yojana*, complete absorption of one thing in another. In *āropa* stage the mind of the *naṭa* oscillates between “this is me and this is Rāma.” Then in *Abhimāna* stage *naṭa* thinks that “Myself is Rāma” and finally at *yojana* stage, *abhimāna (ahaṃ)* goes away and only Rāma remains. At this stage *naṭa* becomes the connecting link between the poet and the *sahṛdaya* transforming the artificial to artistic by his expertise in *abhinaya* and transferring the metaphysical into spiritual. This is the state of *sādhāraṇikaraṇa*, state of consciousness. *Sādhāraṇikaraṇa* removes all the barriers between the knower. Knowing and Knowable, between the *draṣṭā*, *dṛṣṭi* and *dṛśya*. In the ocean of consciousness, the subject object-difference vanishes, and mind reposes on one *rasa*, that is *ekarasa sthīti bhāveikarasena manaḥ sthitam*.

Rasa is the unique phenomenon of Indian aesthetics. It is the most important contribution to the world. *Rasa* is the elemental concept that constitutes the human personality. It shapes the character of a person, his nature, temperament habit, refinement, and attitude towards life. *Rasa* helps a person to assimilate aesthetic ideals and aesthetic taste. It ensures man’s spiritual perfection and self-realisation.

In the present state of society we experience emotional upheavels and mental hunger. One needs the delicate care of emotional state. In a society of growing violence and henonistic extravaganza *rasa* becomes a dire necessity to save the human race from this disater. Becuuse beneath every *Ratnākara*, the sinner, awaits the *Vālmiki*, the sage, for his redemption and to traverse towards the delecatable mountain where bliss reigns.

Now a days in this ever globalizing world, capital flow across the world with lightning speed, media events broadcast any where in the globe like incidents next door. In this connection ethics and nourishment of character become increasingly important issues.

Indian spiritualism says man's destiny lies in the nurturing of soul. Every human is able to aspire to gain the spiritual power. For that, one has to get total transformation of our consciousness which is called as consciousness ethics. It empowers us for the next millennium. Consciousness ethics is nothing but a kind of heightened awareness. It has four major characteristics, firstly, it is visionary in that it reveals hidden potentials in human consciousness especially potentials that lead to improving the quality of life in a non-physical sense. Secondly it strenghens our sense of beauty and stimulates creativity in all respects, including artistic creation. Thirdly it is disciplined by rationality and logic. Fourthly it encourages respect for universal human dignity.

All these characteristics - encompasses the following.

1. widening of the human horizon.
2. development of aesthetic consciousness.
3. perception of beauty through art.
4. The satisfaction of the aesthetic need of a human being.
5. perception of beauty is as act of love and this leads to refinement of our sensibilities.
6. rationality seeks spirituality to keep away superstition and blind faith.
7. It is based on the dignity and equality of all human beings.

What are the out come of this effort ?

1. It can save the whole human generation.

2. It can prevent globalization from becoming malignant.
3. One can transcend the limits of one's personal existence and can become impersonal.

This approach is to transform the innerself through perception of beauty and love in the form of art. By this way one can shape his character and ultimately the cultures of the world. The consciousness ethics can assist in the birth of a more beautiful and just world. So go global with aesthetic consciousness or *rasa* in your heart.

Prāyeṇa sarvabhāvānām kāmānnispattirisyate. Almost all *bhāvas* are accomplished and terminated at *Kāma*, says Bharata. *Kāma* is the underlying principle in Indian aesthetics. According to Indian religious tradition *kāma* is at the foundation of this creation *Rgveda* declares

*kāmastadagre samavartādhi /
manaso retaḥ pratham yadasū //*

Kāma is the firstborn. The creation, sprouted from *kāma*, or desire, is also nourished and nurtured in *kāma*. “*So'kāmayat vahusyām prajayeyete*” The *ādi puruṣa* desired, “may I have a second” and then he become many. *Puruṣaḥ* is described as *kāmamaya*. So *kāma* or love is the *vikāra* of Brahman. The Lord himself declares in *Srīmad Bhagavat Gītā*. I am Love incarnate *bhuteṣu kāmōsmi*.

Kāma is most inadequately translated as Eroticism by the western thinkers. Eroticism is a notion that is described as sexual excitement or desire on which the society puts the blanket of vulgarity. Contrary to this, the Indian poets and play-wrights extoll it by establishing that Eroticism is a state of mind. It has only a marginal bearing on body. They place it in the resplendent region of sublimity lifting it from the gross physical manifestation. The writers are not indifferent towards the wholesomeness and naturality of relationship between man and woman. The Indian poets proclaim that the souls are prepared for spiritual fusion before their first meeting. Love is the essence of soul, the body is only a medium to express the soul's essence.

The Indian traditions of aesthetics and Rhetorics have treated Love or *Śṛṅgāra* very tenderly and proficiently and defined it with lots of explicitness Bharata invents purity (*śucitā*) eminence, effulgence and agreeability in *Śṛṅgāra*. He places love at the

centre of his concern and conceives that sense perceptions, feeling and consciousness are the basis of *Śṛṅgāra* or love. The all- encompassing spirit of *Śṛṅgāra* is depicted in to *artha-Śṛṅgāra*, desire for wealth, *dharma-Śṛṅgāra*, desire for virtue and duty, *mokṣa Śṛṅgāra*, desire for liberation and also *kāma Śṛṅgāra*, a whole world of desire for love in human life. Bharata's deep insights in to the nature of human consciousness and feeling is explicitly stated as identification of personality types and classification of *nāyaka* and *nāyikā*.

Agni purāṇa conceives *Śṛṅgāra* as the *vikāra* of Brahman manifested through *citśakti* as *ānanda*. *Ānanda* is transformed in to *ahaṅkāra* at the first stage, then to *abhimāna*. When *abhimāna* comes in contact with worldly objects it turns into *rati* that is the *sthāyibhāva* of *Śṛṅgāra*. *Agnipurāṇa* adds the quality of bliss and beauty to *Śṛṅgāra*.

For *Ānandavardhana* *Śṛṅgāra* is the sweetest emotion inundating great pleasure. *Śṛṅgāra eva para prahlādano rasah*. For Viswanātha and Bhoja, *Śṛṅgāra* is 'mananukula' charming and agreeable to mind. Bhoja proclaims *Śṛṅgāra* as 'atmasthanu' quality of soul. Depicting *Śṛṅgāra* as *sukhātmikā anubhuti*, *Sāradātanaya* admits the ecstatic quality of relish *āsvādāna*. The sublimity and subtlety of *Śṛṅgāra* is duely depicted by *Sāradātanaya*, delineating it as *sukhasamvedanātmikā*. *Sāradātanaya* delicately depicts the development of *sthāyibhāva rati* in to *Śṛṅgāra* step by step *Rati* being sprouted up in *prema*, budding in *māna*, blossomed in *praṇaya*, flowered in *sneha*, bears fruit in *rāga* and is relished in *anurāga*.

*iyam aṅkuritā premṇā mānātpallavitā punaḥ
sakorakā praṇatyātaḥ snehātkuśumita bhavet
rāgāt phalavati ceyamnurāgeṇa bhujyate //*

Rupagoswami exclusively treats *Śṛṅgāra* saying that *atreva paramotkarṣaḥ śṛṅgārasya pratiṣṭitaḥ*. He admits the existence of concentrated sweetness in *Śṛṅgāra* and accepts it's omnipresence in all spheres of *bhāva*. The poet says —

Just as *rasa* is present in sugarcane, in juice, in *guḍa*, *khandā*, *sarkarā*, *sita* and *sitopalā* so also *rati* is present in all the spheres of *bhāvas* like *prema*, *sneha*, *mana*, *praṇaya*, *rāga* and *anurāga*. These are different stages of intensification and manifestation

of *bhāva*. Rupagoswami adds another quality of love that is indestructibility. Just like truth, love is the eternally present in heart. “*Sarvathā dvaṃsarahitam*”. All these virtues and qualities of *Śṛṅgāra* enshrine the sentiment on the throne of *Sahṛdaya*’s heart as *rasa rāja*.

Indian tradition of knowledge venerates the digit sixteen as the most efficacious one denoting completeness or *purnatā*. Veda declares Brahman as *ṣoḍaśi* consisting of sixteen *kalās*. An attempt has been made to invent the sixteen dimensions of *Śṛṅgāra* that makes this divine and universal phenomenon the most perfect emotion. Those qualities are inseparable from *Śṛṅgāra*, such as — *mādhurya*, *audārya*, *prasāda*, *lāvanya*, *ojasvitā*, *avichhinnatā*, *tanamayatā*, *ananyatā*, *anirvacaniyatā*, *ātyantikatā*, *triguṇātītātā*, *rasottirnatā*, *unmuktatā*, *samarpaṇa*, *samādhi* and *prasānti*.

Experiencing *Śṛṅgāra* is an spiritual elevation. The fetters of heart are broken and the soul rejoices in the realm of splendid sweetness beauty and bliss. Love is *praasparāśraya gahanam nirudham bhāva vandhanam*. It is the intimate, intense, inter-dependent emotional bondage between the lover and beloved. At this stage desire to get each other reigns supreme. When happens manorathanirodhana, that intense desire is obstructed it becomes *māna*. *Māna* can be called as the measuring rod of love. Then love extends into *praṇaya* when mind becomes soft and desire sub-dued. *Sambhogah* is the enjoyment of each other with deep sensual pleasure. *Sambhogah* is the state of agreeability of two young hearts manifested physically in the form of *darśana*, *ālingana*, *cumbana*, etc. The Indian aesthetic tradition also enumerates different stages of love termed as *kāma dasās* or *smara dasās*.

Vipralambah the love in separation adds variegated charm to love. *Preme vaicitrya sañja sthu vipralambha*. In *Vipralambha*, all *sātvika bhāvas* are ignited and the *anubhāvas* are manifested with culminating emotional intensity. Through *Vipralambha*, *Śṛṅgāra* ascends to the summit of *mahābhāva*.

The grief of Rāma sorrowing for Sitā and Sitā pinning for Rāma in the *Aśhoka* grove are the most classical instances of the sublime love as conceived in India. The pages of Indian Literature have been replete with many examples, of *Vipralambha* such as lamentation of *Aja* with heart broken grief at the death of his beloved wife

Indumati, the sublime yet passionate out-pouring of the heart of *Yaşkha* exiled from his beloved wife as depicted in *Meghadūtam*, and many many more.

Constancy in love is the highest quality stressed by the ancient Indian poets. This constancy in love is presented in beautiful manner by extending it to animals and birds. The grief of the *Cakravāka* couple has become proverbial while delineating *Vipralambha*. In *Raghuvamşam*, Kālidasa, the great poet of India sings about the sacred spirit of love kindled in the nature.

śaśinam punar eti śarvarī
dayitū dvandva charam patatrinam /
iti tau virahāntara kshamau katham
atyantagata nā mām daheḥ // — Raghuvamşam, VII, 56

The most famous *Virahakathā* of Indian literary tradition is the grief of the *Krouñca* bird, when separated from her mate by the hunter's arrow. The pitiful lamentation of the anguished *Krouñca* when her mate is just on the point of death gave a new turn to the course of Indian literature. From *śoka* conceived the charming and sweet style of *śloka* and *Rāmāyaṇa* was created by *ādikavi* Vālmiki.

Vālmiki, the ever sweetest poet of India, has unveiled the charming way of communication and expression for the poets of posterity. Throughout the centuries in India, the authors, poets, performers have produce diverse tellings of *Rāmāyaṇa* in numerous media.

Rāmāyaṇa transcends region, race, religion, language and the vicissitudes of time and history. The popularity of *Rāmakathā* is astonishingly unbounded. The legend of Rāma has undergone countless variations in the process of diffusion all over the world. Even in India, the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and other versions are numberless. Like the famous vedic saying "*Sahasraśirṣā puruṣaḥ*". *Puruṣaḥ* having thousand heads and thousand feet, the original *Rāmāyaṇa kathā* has thousands and thousands enumerations, elaborations, transmigrations and translations. It has become *sahasradhāra*. But defying all the alterations and deviations the unifying essence remains the same. The kernel of legend is the main-source that diffuses sweetness to millions of human hearts. The tradition of *Rāmāyaṇa* has been transmitted to all other Indian languages like Tamil,

Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, Gujurati, Kasmir, Punjabi, Assameese, Manipuri, Bengali, Oriya Even it crosses the border of India and reaches at Nepal, Mongolia, Burma, Malayasia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Philippiness, Srilanka and others. The legend has become the lyric of Asia as it spreads, from Siberia to Indonesia, filling their 'self' with ecstasy and bliss. The voluminous Rāma-literature of many centuries is a monument of idealism of India. The 'cry' of the bereaved female *krauncha* bird, moaning in the human heart, is the substratum or 'ādhāra' of *Rāmāyaṇa*. It has resounded in the whole world, through various regions and lands by this immense process of transmission and transmigration.

A legend becomes living, when it becomes responsive to the changes according to the time, tradition, and tastes of people. The numerous developments and changes in *Rāmakathā* in the span of more than two thousand years of its existence, find adequate explanation in the sociological, religious, cultural and ethical spheres. The legend of Rāma has become the living example of culture and tradition for more than two thousand years. During all these years it has been told and retold, continuously by numerous poets, dramatists, authors in multiple languages like Sanskrit, *Prākṛit*, *Apabhraṃsa* and other Indian and South-east Asian languages. *Rāmāyaṇa* has been a source of perpetual inspiration to the creative genius and the religious life of the people of India. The numerous versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in all regional languages of India from Kāshmir to *Kanyākumāri* from Gujarat to Assam, prove that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has really been a part of the life and blood of Indian civilization and culture. The influence of *Rāmāyaṇa* on Indian music, painting, dance, drama and sculpture also support the above conclusion.

The exploration of these various texts in various genre, various ways of conceptualisation of the story of Rāma shows that they become the expression of an extra-ordinary rich sources of Indian Culture. Ramayana tradition can be seen as a crystalization of characters and thoughts. The poets and authors bring out unique texture, new text and fresh context while producing their creations. In this light of structure, diversity and context, it is very interesting to analyse the sanskrit plays based on *Rāmakathā*. The vitality and significance of this genre, the dramas or performing art testifies in cultural and social context.

Śrī Rāma is worshiped with utmost devotion as the embodiment of righteousness and truth. He is treated as the moral paradigm and incarnation of God. Vālmiki has created Rāma with all perfections to exemplify before the society. But every perfection has its problems. Especially those, who became examples, who became paragon of virtues and morality. No doubt Rāma an exemplary hero that he is, who attracts the utter love and devotion of every one. Still there are certain contexts in *Rāmāyaṇa* that puts question mark on his idealized model of humanity, such as his treatment of Sita after the war with Rāvaṇa and her restoration by him, the unfair slaying of Vālin, the monkey king and the mutilation of *Sūrpanakhā*. The poets of posterity have tried to refashion these points by their own justification and dramatic characterisation. They have added many changes and renovations, many ideas and innovations to their plays to clarify these deeds and to keep his image of “*maryādā pūruṣottama*” before the world. In many ways the critical and culminating moments in the *Rāmakathā* have been demystified and explained. So it is very interesting to analyse the Rāma based plays in the light of evolution of Rāma’s character, how gradually it becomes opened up petal by petal, stage by stage, by the logical and emotional sequences given by different playwrights like Bhāsa, Bhavabhūti, Mūrāri, Jayadeva etc.

These plays are treated in the light of sentiment of *śṛṅgāra*, as almost all the plays except few are pregnant with enigmatic presence of sublime love of Rāma and Sitā, the epitome of Indian conjugal love. If we go through these plays we find that a transformation has taken place in Rāma’s loving self which was clouded under the social and religious duties. Another important reason to take *śṛṅgāra* as significant aspect of the *Rāmakathā* based plays is to share fully our essential perceptions on “separation in love or *Vipralambhaḥ*”.

Rāmakathā springs from *Vipralambhaḥ*, the separation of the *krouñca* couple. The undertone of sorrows in separation permeates throughout *Rāmāyaṇa* expressing poignant emotions of almost all the main characters, which makes *Rāmāyaṇa* reverberating with *Karuṇa*. But one should not forget the inherent asymmetry in the relations between the *Vipralambhaḥ* and *śṛṅgāra*.

Vipralambhaḥ is the essence of love, it is also striking that from this point of view the main sentiment in *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Kāvya*s based on *Rāmāyaṇa* happens to be

none other than *śṛṅgāra*, despite the tremendous announcement of *Karuṇa* as the *aṅgīrasa* in them. In each play, there is opening up of the dimensions of discovery and celebration of explicit emotion *śṛṅgāra*. We can take the plays of Bhavabhūti as an example here.

Dramas are *prayāga-pradhānā*. Its success depends on the illusions of the audience. The dramatist himself lives the life of the characters, experiences the thoughts and represents it skillfully. Bhavabhūti says in *Uttararāmacharita* “Here I turn into a citizen of *Ayodhyā* of Rāma’s days, since the plot requires me to”.

“*esomi bhoḥ kavivasāt karyavasāt ca ayodhikas tadanintanas ca samvṛtāḥ*”

Mere directions or description are not enough to create such an illusion on the audience. The power of the dramatist that creates and sustains such an illusion is the dramatic touch. The back ground, the reflections of sentiment create such an illusion. Bhavabhūti takes so many liberties with the original story that he has remodelled the characters. In the introduction to *Mahāvira Caritam* he says “He is writing *Rāmakathā*, the joy of Raghu race who has been brave, adventures and heroic. It is natural for a poetic mind to be attracted towards and inspired by whatever is grate.” But when the poet reaches at Vāli episod he realises that heroism and cruelty could not be distinguished. There is a very thin line of difference between these two qualities. When *Parśurāma* attacks on Rāma during his marriage, the poet says “*dhig aho viravṛatakruratum*” “a couse on cruelty which called a hero’s characteristics”

Bhavabhūti has little admiration for the heroes who repeat their cruel act of exploiting and killing the innocent one. Then Bhavabhūti has decided to explore the loving emotion *śṛṅgāra* in his plays, because he found *Mahaviracharitam* as nothing other than a blood-curdling story. A hero must be a powerful person man, but he need not be a cruel one. So Bhavabhūti has finally acknowledged that love could be the only culminating emotion and a great social force where a powerful can be seen to be tender-hearted and vast like the great emotion. It is really a stroke of great talent and poetic genius to select the later life of Rāma. The poet says “the great souls are *Vajradapi kathorāni mṛuduni kusumadapi*,” who is powerful and harder like a Vajra can also be soft, tender and loveble like the flower. So Bhavabhūti selects the *lokotrara carita* of Rāma to prove this philosophy.

In *Mahāvīracaritam* the author has said that he was writing about a hero who punished people those who went against dharma, "*dharmadruho damayituscaritam nibadhanam.*" In *Uttararāmacharita* he shifts his concentration to emotional state of the hero. Throughout the play Rāma is an ideal lover of his wife. He puts his unbound faith on his wife Sita by saying that as holy water and fire need no outside purifiers so also Sitā." Again when Sitā has been banished by him, in her separation he remembers each and every moment spend with her. This is one aspect of Rāma's character, the ideal lover. There is another aspect of Rāma's character, an impetuous, hard hearted, duty-bound and *prajā-vatsala* king of *Ayodhyā*. Rāma says "for the good of people I am prepared to forsake friendship, compassion, happiness even my dearest wife Jānaki (1-12)" No one commends Rāma for his sense of duty as a king when he abandons his pure, and chaste wife Sitā. When Rāma re-visits *Daṇḍaka* forest Vāsanti does not spare him "Oh, you hard hearted, you loved fame more than Sita." "*ayi kaṭhora yasaḥ kila te priyam.*"

The significance of the play is the sublimity of Rāma's character, when finally he falls in shame and humility at Sitā's feet. When in act VI, Rāma talking to Kuśa and Lava is moved to tears, Kuśa says -"without Sitā all his life is misery to Rāma in the absence of his wife the world is wilderness to him, their love was so great and this separation is so sublime, that can not be described."

Throughout the play, the character of Rama is revealed to us not in his own words and deeds, but through the opinion of other characters in the play. Bhavabhuti has depicted Rāma with both positive and negative aspects of his character. But Sitā shines forth in the entire play with great virtues like purity, dedication, patience, unbounded love, consistency and faith on her husband. *Arundhati* speaks about Sitā in act IV "you may be just a child, or a simple woman, but you deserve to be worshipped by the whole world. It is not age or sex that commands respect, but the virtues." (IV-11)

Bhavabhuti says in 1st act, " Sitā is born pure no other purifier is necessary." "*utpattipariputayāḥ kimasyāḥ pavanantaraiḥ*" (1-13) Throughout the play she has been depicted as pure, simple loving, loveable and so on. When Rāma decides to abandon her, he says to himself "I am untouchable, let me not contaminate her." Despite all

these divine virtues, Sitā is quite human. In the 3rd act, where Sitā is invisible to Rāma, but Rāma feels her presence and bursts out “*hā priye Jānaki,*” Sita simply answers “*āryaputra as adṛsam khalvetā dasya vṛttantaishya.*” What was done by you is unlike what you say. In the same act Sitā, seeing Rāma present at *Daṇḍaka* forest is moved emotionally and expresses her pure and serene emotions of a woman in these terms—“remembering my children, with my motherly milk oozing out and with my husband and children near about, even for a moment, I feel like a house-wife.” In spite of all her sorrows and sufferings, the wife and mother in her are so strong that they make her forget every bit of humiliation and unhappiness and feel the happiness of a *samsārini* for a moment *kṣaṇamātram*. When Vāsanti accuses Rāma of torturing and neglecting Sitā, she objects and feels to say “Oh, my friend, why do you speak so, my husband deserves to be respected by every one.” When Rāma bursts out in bitter weeping, she is moved away with love and compassion for Rāma and feels herself responsible for Rama’s such type of torture. When Rāma decides to put Sita’s golden image at the sacrifice Sitā says to herself “I am lucky indeed” See the pathos and pride behind this statement of Sitā. When at the end of the act, Rāma leaves Pañchavati, Sita bids farewell to him saying that - *namah sukṛta punyajanadarshaniyabhyām āryaputra caraṇa kamalābhyām.* “I bow to the feet of my husband, those feet which could be seen only by people those have done many meritorious deeds.” Could any degree of womanhood be nobler than this ?

Thus the story of Rāma’s latter life has been presented as beautifully remodeled, as an perfect piece of artistic creation. A closer analysis of the play show the under current of conjugal love, or *śṛṅgāra* flowing unobstructively from the commencement till the end.

Among the post-Bhavabhuti poets, Murāri comes for ward, with his work *Anargha Rāghava*, where he rightly observes the over whelming popularity of *Rāmakathā* and says, “*aho sakala-kavi sartha-sadharani khaluiyam valmikiya subhasitanivi.*” From the earliest days- Rama’s tale has become the only source that has attracted the attention of the almost all the poets of ancient India. *Kundamāla* by *Diṇnāga* comes closer to Bhavabhuti’s *Uttararāmacarita*, as it also presents the same story line. The main scene

is the title scene where in as Rama is wandering with his brother Lakṣmana in *Naimisā* forest and there a garland of *Kuṇḍa* flower woven by Sitā is carried by the waves of the river. Rāma recognises it, invents Sitā's foot prints, sees the reflection of Sitā on the water. However Viduṣaka discloses the plans of Tīlottamā to play Sitā's role. In these incidents the poet depicts the deep spiritual relationship between Rama and Sita. Throughout the play, many verses show the strong influence of Bhavabhūti. What is interesting is the addition of 'Viduṣaka' in this play though he is not available in Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāmacaritam*.

Murāri's *Anargha-Rāghava*, is more interesting from the angle of Rasa and lyrical aspects. The drama is almost a poetic composition of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The play is embedded with the Erotic sentiment in true *sāstric* sense. In most of these later Rāma plays one motive of these dramatists is obvious, to remodel the character of Rāma according to their dramatic and social requirement. The motive seems to induce moral virtues and ethical qualities in the society through a literary composition.

The one story that was known all over the country down to the commonest man was the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. This is one of the major causes that the Rama plays are written in such a large number. The plays moved from nucleus to numerous creations. Important is the author's commitment to the story of Rāma. The plays emerged with a single integrated base, that is the tale of Rāma with an assimilative and innovative attitude. Thus, our examination, however brief it is, made it clear that the plays based on tale of Rāma though came in to being from the perennial well-spring of the eternal spiritual stories of *Rāmakathā*, are nourished and nurtured by the innovative ideas of the poets and the social, religious distinctiveness which reveal the evolution of Rāma's character down the ages.

Art is nothing but a matter of experience. The poet conceives his creation at a special sublime moment. As a drop of water turns in to a dazzling pearl when it gets into the womb of the oyster-shell under auspicious spell of *Swāti naṣkatra*, so also the experiences of the poet become a beautiful work radiant with creativity. Sometimes some of the pearls remain unnoticed by the real connoisseur " *Maithili Kalyāṇam*, a beautiful pearl among the Rāma plays has, remained unnoticed by the Sahṛdaya as till now.

Maithilikalyānam of Hastimālla is pre-eminently a play of the sentiments of *Śṛṅgāra*. It is a triumph of dramatic lyricism based on the sublime love-story of Rāma and Sītā. The play is the most persuasive elaboration of romantic love.

The work of a literary artist is judged and analysed from various angles and aspects. We may study it biographically seeing it formed by and reflecting the events of his own life or historically seeing it influenced and reflecting the events and thoughts of his age or by trying to trace the development of his thought, vision, and philosophy of life. There is another line of approach that we can study his craftsmanship, and by watching his imagination at work on his materials. In the following chapter an attempt is made to analyse the play *Maithilikalyānam* from the angles of dramaturgy and poet's skill and craftsmanship in depicting *śṛṅgāra*. The poet is highly glorified by the *Sūtradhāra*. *Sūtradhāra* extols the quality of the poetry composed by Hastimālla which gives excellent entertainment to the ears. While listening to that "sukti-s" one can easily discard the finest tuning of *Viñā* and even the most beautiful damsel adorned with mango-buds on her ears as ear-ornaments. *Sūtradhāra* has attributed Hastimālla, as the monarch in the world of poetry and has estimated his poetry more palatable than the nectar.¹

In 6th chapter of this work this play has been intensively analysed. The play has Purvarāga-Vipralambha-Śṛṅgāra as it's *angirasa*. *Pūrvārāga* is a mysterious mental condition, that prevails before the 'rāga' or the actual intimacy of the lovers. This stage of love concentrates on the cosmic power of human perception. The complex and powerful manifestations of spiritual essences or 'Vāsanā' is the reality behind 'pūrvārāga'. 'Pūrvā-rāga' encompasses not only the present birth, but also the previous births of a person. The crux of Indian religious faith is the resurrection or *janmāntara vāda* and that is at the background of 'pūrvā-rāga'.

The poet defines the *Purvarāga vipralambha* in a beautiful verse in this play The verse runs like this -

*prārambhābhimukhe payodasamaye yā cātakasyoikatā,
sītāṃsau niśadhācalāntitakagate harṣaścakorasya yaḥ /*

*āśvāso madhupasya cūtavīṭape niṣkasatkorake
sītādarśanasannikarṣajanitā tādr̥gmamāsau dhṛtiḥ //*

— Maithili Kalyāṇam, 1st chapter, śloka-18

Rāma says- “My heart beats with curiosity and anticipation as the time is approaching nearer to meet Sītā, Just like the eagerness of the skylark, ‘*cātaka*’ awaiting the outburst of clouds shrouding the horizon, Just like the ecstasy of the ‘*cakora*’ beholding the moon ascending the eastern horizon (*niṣadhācala*) just like the delight of the honey bee visualising the luxuriance of the mango-buds about to bloom. My love-laden soul is soothing away, consoled with the approach of the most desired moment. The emotional intensity of the hero is delineated through a series of images. The calm grandeur and serenity of a ‘*dhirodātta nāyaka*’ is beautifully reflected with the natural phenomenas like the warm and intimate relationship of cloud and *cātaka*, moon and *cakora*, the mango-blossoms and the bees.

Poet Hastimalla delineates Rāma in a delicate romantic mood. He is pining at heart for someone unknown, unseen, unacquainted. Only listening about Sītā from others Rāma is eager to meet her. It is mind’s experience. It is the incipient love, that sparks of the essence of soul. Rāma is anxious to meet Sītā, but it is more worsening that she has become दुर्लभदर्शना.

Rāma’s warm, languor of love, is sustained with artistic effort of the poet. It remains intense to the last. The ‘shadowy queen’ of Rāma’s heart does not ‘fade away’ Rāma responds to *vidūṣaka*’s news and his mind gets a little consolation that Sītā is coming to Kāmadeva’s temple to offer her prayer. With *Vidūṣaka*, Rāma starts his quest for his beloved Sītā. Both of them enter in the joyous, overflowing bounteousness of spring season at *Mithilā*.

The poet makes his *dhirodātta nāyaka* Rāma and *nāyikā* Sītā to meet each other at the abode of Love, *Kāmadeva Bhavana* and only giving a glimpse Sītā goes away awakening intense yearning in Rāma’s heart. The poet pictures Rāma going through the stages of love *Kāmadāsās*. Love is a psychological self-exploration being manifested through body through different psycho-physical expressions. Poet Hastimalla lingers lovingly on these *Kāmadāsās* of both his hero and heroine. Both of them meet each

other in the calm gradeave of nature in the 4th act of the play the poet portrays the passion-tranced rendezvous of his hero and heroine and finally in the 5th act the 'swayambara' dhanubhaᅅga and Maithili's *kalyāᅇam* or marriage are depicted.

This play has been taken as an beautiful example of Erotic Rāma play, It can be called as a practical experience with Erotic. How the *sthāyibhāva rati* matures in to *śᅇᅅgāra* luxuriating through the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *saᅅcāribhāvas* are beautifully depicted in this play. Rāma is treated as an *dhirodatta nāyaka* having all the eight *sāitvika bhāvas* and Sitā the princess of *Mithilā* as a *mugdhā nāyikā* putting her feet at the thresh hold of youth and love. We have beautiful background of *uddipana vibhāvas* like the advent of spring season, the celebration of *Madanotsava*, the abundance of flowers and fragrances and the charming nature itself.

The naᅇa imitates Rāma through *anusandhāna*. The *vāsanās* accumulated in the deep layer of sattva gets ignited and manifested through *āropa*, *abhyāsa* and *anusandhāna* and finally the *Sahᅇdaya*, in his consciousness experiences the bliss of *rasa*.

The ancient rhetoricians of India have preserved the essence and eternal aspect of art in their definitions of *kāvya*. One can discover all those qualities in this supreme piece of art *Maithilikalyāᅇa*, such as *lālitya* and *mādatatā* of Bharata, *Soundarya* of Vāmana, *Īᅇᅅārtha* of Dandin, *Viᅇiᅇᅅā ukti* of Kuntaka, *sabᅇārtha* of Mammaᅇa, *rasamayatā* of Visvanathā and *ramaᅇiyatā* of Jagannatha.

Let the *Rāmakatha Mandākini* flow eternaly unendingly.

रामकथा मन्दाकिनी चित्रकूटचित्तचारु ।

तुलसी सुभग सनेह वन सि रघुवीर विहार ॥

